

My name is Robert Sobkoviak, and I am a federally licensed amateur radio (“ham radio”) operator with the call-sign K9NYO. I am a volunteer employee of the Plainfield Emergency Management Agency in Plainfield, Illinois. As part of that agency, I am an officer in the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), and I use amateur radio extensively to support local civil defense, disaster relief and severe weather spotting activities. Additionally, I am the Emergency Coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in Will County, Illinois and RACES Officer for the Will County Emergency Management Agency in Joliet, Illinois. Amateur radio is a vital communication tool throughout the county in times of emergency.

I am very concerned with the FCC’s consideration of expanding opportunities for Broadband over Power Line (BPL). While I am a proponent of the proliferation of broadband connections, in the town and area where I live, above the ground power lines are the rule rather than the exception. The opportunity for this type of broadband delivery would cause excessive interference on the High Frequency (HF) spectrum for which I am a licensed primary user. The FCC has pledged to protect licensed users of this spectrum, and the amateur radio community of 600,000 operators in the United States will hold the FCC to that promise. I am to understand that even below the ground power lines would cause massive interference to High Frequency spectrum, rendering it useless in most cases. This will cause a significant decline in the ability of amateur radio operators to give assistance in times of need.

I urge the FCC to enforce the Part 15 rules and limit the usage of BPL and its present interference with existing primary HF and VHF spectrum usage. And with the clear understanding that it is against the common good to limit amateur radio communication, always available—especially when all else fails—during times of emergency by volunteers licensed, trained and committed to giving aid.